Real Women Have Curves Worksheet

1. Describe the *stasis* in the play: where, when, who, what, etc. in a paragraph.

The play is set in Los Angeles in 1987. It revolves around five Mexican American women who work in a clothing factory - one of the women (Estela) owns it, and her mother (Carmen), sister (Ana), and two friends (Pancha and Rosali) work under her.

2. What is the *intrusion*?

The intrusion happens when Estela reveals that she does not have her legal residence papers yet. This information snowballs many other problems for her company since she cannot submit her papers before her criminal record is clean and cannot pay off her bills until the clothing company pays her.

3. What is the *unique factor*?

The unique factor would be when the women see the van outside their window and assume it’s an immigration officer’s vehicle. This sparks the conversation with Estela about her papers.

4. What is the *dramatic question* that should be answered by the end of the play?

Will Estela be deported by the people in the mysterious van???

5. Provide an illustration of the *two kinds of exposition* that the play has in it.

Information known to one character: Ana knows she really wants to go to college and write, and this information helps the audience understand she character and long term goals. Estela doesn't have a green card in the beginning

Information known to all characters: Living without a green card is a serious risk - for this reason, all the women instinctively hide when they see the van outside their house, even though they think they all have their papers. The women are aware of their conditions

6. Identify the most *theatrical moment* in the play and of what importance it seems to be.

The most theatrical moment seems to be when all the women remove their clothes and compare their bodies. This scene could take the audience by surprise, and it gets the women to appreciate themselves. Also, it makes them start to think about opening a store that sells larger sized items, which is what they end up doing at the end of the play. Also the birthday party at the end

7. List some of the *themes* of the play.

Some themes would include:

* immigration policies/legal residence
* a woman’s say in sexual matters
* body image
* fair wages in the work place
* growing up/adolescence

8. What do the principal characters *want* and what are some *obstacles* that stand in the way of them getting what they want?

Ana wants to go to college and study writing, but she has limited funds, and her family doesn't believe she can indeed succeed in a writing career.

Estela wants to be a legal, working resident, but her two criminal charges prevent her from doing this. Furthermore, she hasn't been paid by the clothing company she works for, so she cannot resolve her court case.

Carmen wants to believe she is pregnant again, and spends much of the play trying to convince herself she is. Near the end, we find out she is not.

9. Describe some possible *images* in the play and how does the *title* help us understand the play.

The stifling heat in the factory could represent the oppressive force society has on these women as they struggle to get green cards and fair wages.

The clothes they are making (and struggling with) could signify their insecurities about their own bodies, their society, and their place as women in that society. They are creating coverings for other people just as they themselves are covering up their life struggles.

The title, *Real Women Have Curves*, is placed very powerfully as the last line of the play. It takes many of the sentiments brought out in the play and combines them into one poignant statement. What makes a “real woman” was mentioned several times in the play, and the actress’ body shape propelled much of the conversation and action throughout the performance.

10. Briefly define the *family relationships* that are examined in the play.

In this play, one of Carmen’s daughters runs the factory while her mother and sister work for her. This is a unique situation, and causes some friction between these three family members. The play also examines how a woman should relate to her husband when it comes to having sex - should she refuse or go along with him? Carmen mentions several times that it would be a good thing for her daughters to find themselves husbands and that she would like to see grandchildren soon.